

Cameroon

Archetype **Resource suppliers**

GDP / person **\$2k**

Population **29.88M**

10-yr trend **3.5%**

Gradual **5.6%** · **#120**

Fast **4.9%** · **#127**

WHERE CAMEROON STARTS

Cameroon enters the AGI era as a resource supplier: an economy that sells the build-out its raw inputs. Fuel is 54% of its exports. But it is a lower-middle-income version of the type, at about \$1,972 GDP per person, and it lacks the build capacity its peers hold. Physical build speed scores 1.4 out of 5, below the group's median. Compute and energy access is 1.1, near the bottom of the world. What Cameroon does have is room to grow: catch-up headroom scores 4.2, because it starts so far behind the frontier. Its bilingual French-English workforce gives it a language inclusion score of 3. Real assets exist — the Kribi deep-water port, the Nachtigal hydropower dam, the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline. Ten-year trend growth is 3.5% a year. The binding constraint is power and connectivity, not ambition.

THE THREE PATHS

These are simulations, not forecasts. The Modest path is the baseline, and the two AGI scenarios fork from it. Under the **Modest** scenario, AI stays a normal technology. Cameroon would grow at 3.6% a year, 54th of 157, roughly its trend plus a fraction. An economy at that pace doubles in about twenty years. Under **Gradual** takeoff, growth would build for two decades and reach 5.6% a year once AGI matures around 2045, ranking 120th, a doubling every thirteen years or so. The long runway lets rising demand for its resources and slow diffusion lift the economy above trend. Under **Fast** takeoff, growth would reach 4.9% a year from the early 2030s, a doubling roughly every fifteen years, but Cameroon's rank would slip to 127th. A fast world does less for Cameroon than a gradual one, because speed rewards the compute, capital and chips it does not hold. That is the region's hardest lesson. Politics and regulation could slow or redirect any of these paths. How Cameroonians and their government respond to transformative AI is a variable the model holds constant.

HOW YOU WOULD KNOW WHICH WORLD YOU ARE IN

The three scenarios look almost the same until about 2030. Watch leading indicators, not GDP, and check them live. Three global signals matter most. First, whether the METR task-horizon curve keeps doubling every four to five months through 2027–28; METR publishes it at metr.org. Second, whether frontier-lab revenue and capital spending keep compounding; Epoch AI tracks both at epoch.ai. Third, whether growth in the ten to twenty most-ready economies — the United States and China above all — breaks above trend in the early 2030s. Double-digit growth there within a couple of years of 2030 would signal a fast world. A point or two above trend by the mid-2030s would signal a gradual one. A fade back to trend

would signal a modest one. Cameroon's own signals would arrive earlier than the growth data: new contracts and prices for its oil, gas and timber; whether Nachtigal runs at full output and new generation reaches financial close; and how fast fibre and electricity connections spread to households and firms.

IF GROWTH GOES EXPLOSIVE

For Cameroon, it would not. Its rates are modest by world standards. At 5.6% growth a year under the gradual path, it would fall further behind a frontier compounding near 19.5%, and under fast takeoff the gap would be wider still, against a frontier near 39.2%. Measured against its own 3.5% trend, though, the gradual path would be real progress: the economy would double in about thirteen years, so a child born today would enter a workforce in an economy twice as large. Rising wages at home could ease the pressure on young Cameroonians to emigrate for work. There is an honest downside. Fuel is more than half of exports, and a commodity boom is not a development strategy. If AI speeds the shift away from fossil fuels, or reprices them, rents that were never converted into power, skills and capacity would simply evaporate. The hedge is to bank the boom into lasting assets while it lasts. Even then, the pace-setter would shift to the state, testing whether the national oil company, the ministries, the ports at Douala and Kribi and the courts can permit, tax and account fast enough.

WHAT CAMEROON CAN DO NOW

Three levers follow from the scores, and two pay off whether or not AGI arrives. The first is AI diffusion capacity, low at 1.9. Digital skills, deployment-permissive rules and digitised government services carry weight even in the skeptic's world, so this is a no-regret move, and Cameroon's bilingual workforce gives it a head start. The second no-regret lever is physical build speed, at 1.4: faster permitting, pre-zoned land and transmission built ahead of demand help under every scenario, and electrifying homes and firms is worth doing on its own. The third lever is the bet. Compute and energy access, at 1.1, carries the most weight of all but barely moves growth if AI stays ordinary; under a fast takeoff it would be Cameroon's biggest lever. Closing it means packaging hydropower, gas and land to draw data-center investment and secure chip access through partners. A \$1,972-per-person economy cannot fund this alone. Cameroon can adapt a model from its archetype: Chile paired cheap renewable power with hyperscale data centres from Google and Microsoft. A cautious government can act on the two no-regret levers today and lose nothing if the skeptics are right. Open the atlas's [policy editor](#) to see how moving these scores reshapes each path.

The three levers — and which pay off regardless

AI diffusion capacity

score 1.9 / 5 · weight 24 under skeptic → 13 under fast takeoff

Counts under the Modest scenario too (24→13). Closing this gap pays off whether or not AGI arrives.

No-regret

Compute & energy access

score 1.1 / 5 · weight 8 under skeptic → 24 under fast takeoff

Weight climbs from 8 to 24 as takeoff nears. It barely moves growth if AI stays ordinary — the lever that needs a view on the takeoff.

AGI bet

Physical build speed

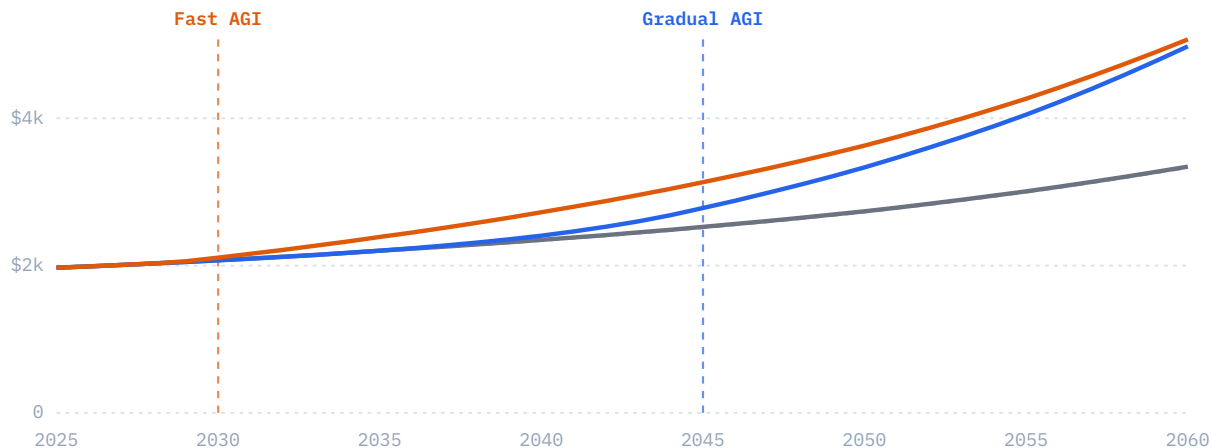
score 1.4 / 5 · weight 8 under skeptic → 17 under fast takeoff

Weight climbs from 8 to 17 as takeoff nears. It barely moves growth if AI stays ordinary — the lever that needs a view on the takeoff.

AGI bet

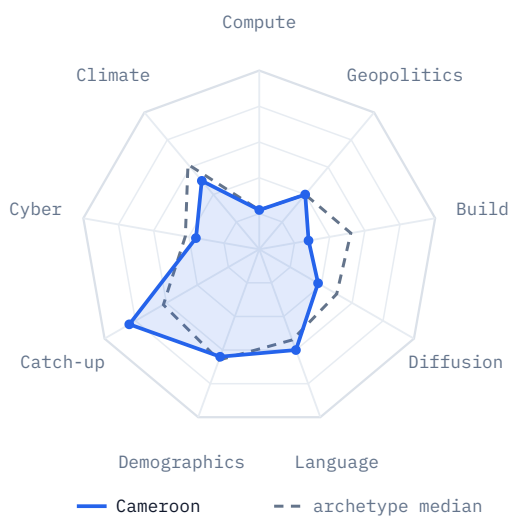
The no-regret levers pay off in every scenario, so a cautious government can act on them today. The AGI bets become decisive only if takeoff is real.

GDP per person to 2060, by scenario



Linear scale; solid lines are the three scenarios, dashed grey the no-AI baseline. Growth ramps from 2027 to each scenario's rate at its AGI year (Fast ~2030, Gradual ~2045), then holds. Timing and divergence are the point, not end levels; steep paths exit the top of the capped axis.

The nine factors



Solid: Cameroon. Dashed: the median of its archetype. Scores are relative to the other 156 countries (3 ≈ global median, 5 = leading today).

Outcomes under each scenario

SCENARIO	GROWTH / YR	WORLD RANK	INDEX	DOUBLING
Modest	3.6%	54 / 157	48.9	19.6 yrs
Gradual	5.6%	120 / 157	45.8	12.7 yrs
Fast	4.9%	127 / 157	39.5	14.5 yrs

Post-AGI growth rate, rank among 157 countries, AGI Growth Index (0–100, scenario-weighted), and the implied economy doubling time. The Modest path is the baseline the AGI scenarios fork from.

THE THREE SCENARIOS

Modest the Acemoglu view

AI as a normal productivity tool

Intelligence was never the binding constraint on growth, so AI delivers real but ordinary gains. Each country gets a one-time boost of a couple of percent of GDP, phased in through 2035; growth then returns to trend. The mainstream-economics view.

≤0.66% TFP over a decade – a one-time gain

Cameroon: 3.6% growth a year · #54 of 157

Gradual Erdil & Besiroglu, base case

Broad automation, on a long timeline

Broad automation of remote work arrives around 2045, with gains building slowly from the late 2020s. Growth then reaches up to ~20% a year for the best-positioned countries — ten times today's frontier trend. A slow arrival gives countries time to adapt, so the gains are wide but uneven.

up to ~20%/yr after 2045 – 10× the frontier trend

Cameroon: 5.6% growth a year · #120 of 157

Fast Erdil & Besiroglu, fast takeoff

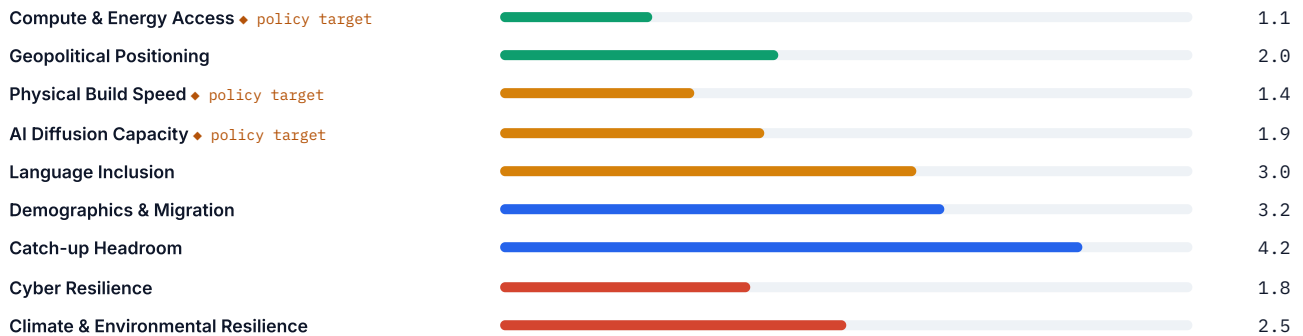
Fast takeoff — today's infrastructure decides

Transformation lands around 2030, before countries can adjust. Whoever already owns compute, capital and the ability to build wins; the gap between countries widens dramatically — and some are left growing slower than they would have without AGI.

up to ~40%/yr from 2030

Cameroon: 4.9% growth a year · #127 of 157

Factor scores — and where policy bites



♦ marks this country's highest-leverage policy targets: the weakest factors carrying the most weight under the AGI scenarios. The atlas's interactive policy editor (agigrowth.org/#editor) simulates how raising any score changes growth under each scenario.

Archetype: Resource suppliers

They sell the build-out its inputs — copper, fuels, bauxite, iron ore, uranium.

Wins: The physical build-out — the one lower-income group with terms-of-trade upside under fast takeoff.

Watch: A commodity boom is not a development strategy; the rents must be converted or they evaporate.

Chile **14%** · #19

Colombia **12.1%** · #36

Peru **11.1%** · #42

Kazakhstan **9.7%** · #58

Mongolia **8.5%** · #77

Tajikistan **7.4%** · #93

Zambia **6.6%** · #100

Guinea **6.2%** · #107

Algeria **6.1%** · #108

Kuwait **6%** · #111

The regional picture — The framework's hardest conclusion.

Sub-Saharan Africa scores lowest of any region, and it is the only one that does better under a slow takeoff than a fast one — speed rewards the compute, capital and geopolitical assets it lacks most. The physical gap is stark: roughly 600 million people without electricity and under 1% of global data-center capacity, set against the world's fastest-growing workforce — Nigeria alone adds more than Germany's entire population by 2045 in the projections used here. Forty countries are not one story. South Africa and Kenya lead with real digital economies; Senegal, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire absorb selectively; Nigeria and Ethiopia carry the demographic weight and the dividend trap — the young workforce that was the region's asset is the input AI substitutes for. Nine states, from the Sahel juntas to DR Congo and Zimbabwe, sit in the high-risk tier, where state capacity binds before technology does. The mobile-money precedent shows leapfrogging is possible; the compute data shows it has not yet happened at any scale that matters. Given AGI on any timeline, closing the power, connectivity and device gap is the single highest-leverage move on this map — and the twenty-year window before full automation is the time in which it is still cheap to do.

Method, in brief

Each country is scored 1–5 on nine factors from public data (World Bank, Epoch AI, ITU, IMF and national sources). A scenario-weighted average forms the AGI Growth Index (0–100), which maps to a post-AGI growth rate inside ceilings derived from Erdil & Besiroglu (2023): ~20% growth a year for the best-positioned country under Gradual takeoff (AGI ~2045), ~40% under Fast (AGI ~2030); growth ramps convexly from 2027. The scenario sets the growth rates on offer; the index only decides where each country sits within them. The Modest scenario is the skeptics' baseline — a small uplift on each country's own ten-year trend. These are simulations for structured thinking, not forecasts; no probabilities are attached to any scenario.

Watch the global signals live: the METR task-horizon curve at metr.org/time-horizons · frontier-lab revenue at epoch.ai/ai-companies · AI-chip spending at epoch.ai/ai-chip-sales.

Explore further: full methodology agigrowth.org/#methodology · map & rankings agigrowth.org/#explore · country profiles agigrowth.org/#countries · policy editor agigrowth.org/#editor